



Fw: water delivery
Ayn Schmit to: Angela McFadden

01/09/2012 01:31 PM

From: Ayn Schmit/R8/USEPA/US
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History: This message has been replied to.

I'd love to chat with you about this if you have a few minutes...

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Anyone know the back story here?

2. WATER POLLUTION: EPA reneges on water delivery promise

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Twenty-four hours after promising water deliveries to a Pennsylvania town, U.S. EPA on Friday reversed its decision, telling Dimock, Pa., residents that the water truck would not be arriving after all.

"We are actively filling information gaps and determining next steps in Dimock. We have made no decision at this time to provide water," EPA spokeswoman Betsaida Alcantara said in an email to the Associated Press.

At least 18 wells in Dimock -- the town made famous by the documentary "Gasland" -- have been reported polluted after Houston-based Cabot Oil & Gas Co. used a natural gas drilling technique called hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, to tap natural gas stores beneath some residential properties. In 2010, the company was banned from drilling in a 9-square-mile area around Dimock.

For three years, the company had been forced to provide water to Dimock, a responsibility that ended Dec. 1 (*Greenwire*, Dec. 1, 2011). Last week's abrupt about-face once again left townspeople struggling to find clean water for bathing and drinking.

Dimock resident Craig Sautner said EPA staffer Rich Fetzer told him Saturday that the water delivery had been canceled but would not explain why.

"You can't be playing with people's lives like this," said Sautner, whose well was polluted in September 2008, shortly after Cabot began drilling in the area.

Claire Sandberg, executive director of Water Defense, said EPA owed them an explanation.

"It's tragic to see the EPA raise these people's hopes and then dash them, to see the EPA suggest they were beginning to accept their responsibility to protect the public, and then back out a few hours later when these people are so desperate," she said.

Cabot says its fracking operations, which involve injecting chemical-laced fluid into underground shale rocks to bring trapped gas to the surface, did not cause the pollution. The company maintains that the town's water is safe to drink (Michael Rubinkam, AP/Kansas City Star , Jan. 6). -- **PK**

James Martin
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